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## V CORPS COMBAT TEAM JOINS WITH IRAQI POLICE IN REBUILDING SECURITY IN TROUBLED AREA

**By Sgt. Kimberly Snow**

196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**BUHRIZ, Iraq** -- Maj. Art Weeks stood back and surveyed the bustling activity of Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of V Corps' 1st Infantry Division, Iraqi Police Service officers and civilian contractors who have joined forces to re-establish law and order in this town.

"This is the longest we've been in Buhriz without getting shot at," Weeks said matter-of-factly.

The operations officer for 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, Weeks was in charge of oversight for Operation Backbreaker, a project to fortify a new police station and the governor's mansion just down the road.



SGT KIMBERLY SNOW

Soldiers from the New Hampshire Army National Guard's 197th Military Police Company, part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team of V Corps' 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, build barriers during Operation Backbreaker in Buhriz, Iraq. The operation was conducted to secure and fortify a new Iraqi Police station in the town.

Buhriz, near Ba'qubah, has been a hot spot for insurgent activity since the brigade arrived here in February. And in November insurgents attacked the town's police

station, briefly taking it over and ultimately destroying it. The station was moved into an adjacent building, but it, too, was attacked.

Although coalition forces helped the Iraqi police in regain control of the building the same day, the IPs were unable to keep the station on their own, said Diyala provincial police coordinator Capt. Christian H. Solinsky. As a result, the town had been without a security presence for more than a month.

"We've decided to use a new site, because the old police stations were undefendable and were destroyed in attacks," he said. "So we've taken this new building and had some work done on it and we're going to use it as a police station. We're facilitating that by making it more defendable."

In order to do that, troops from the 1/6th's Charlie Company first secured the area with help from Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry. IPS officers worked alongside the troops, setting up a defensive perimeter and rooftop observation points at the new station and surrounding buildings.

Engineers from the division's Task Force 82nd and the North Dakota National Guard's Charlie Company, 141st Engineer Combat Battalion then cleared and leveled about 80,000 square feet of palm and orange groves that flanked the station to clear fields of fire and create a parking lot. They filled barriers surrounding the buildings, and laid about 600 meters of triple-strand concertina wire at the police station alone.

Soldiers from the 197th Military Police Company of the New Hampshire National Guard also lent a hand, setting up the Hesco barriers and emplacing concertina wire on top of them.

"We have a national guard unit here that's actually doing a lot of the work that they do back in their home state," said Solinsky. "It's not really their Army mission, but that's what they really do, operate heavy machinery, construction."

The operation went off almost without a hitch. On the second night of operations insurgents attacked the perimeter with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms. However, Soldiers and Iraqi police officers quickly subdued the attack, said Solinsky.

Although the project took a lot of coordination, the addition of both a new police chief and director of operations, as well as the commitment shown by the IPS, made the project possible.

"Pretty much through their influence, we were able to get civilian contractors down here today," he said. "It's not a very popular thing right now in some places, especially Buhriz, to show open support. So it takes a lot of nerve on the part of the IPs to step up and prove themselves."

